



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0890OH-1 for Lancaster City Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has established a focus on personalized learning environments through the use of blending learning opportunities, increased teacher capacity, data systems to inform various stakeholders, and collective partnerships. The reform vision has clear components but does not present a coherent and comprehensive picture of reform. The approaches outlined by the district are credible and have the potential to improve student achievement.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has identified all schools (elementary, middle and high school) in the application. The district has identified the needs of students (socioeconomic status, graduation rate, achievement levels, mobility rate) in seeking this reform application. The district did not identify a process for the selection of schools.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has provided clear outcomes to drive their reform efforts. The district is planning to build the capacity of its teachers through professional development on what are personalized learning environments. The addition of deans to some elementary buildings will allow the principals to more instructionally focused to support the implementation of the personalized learning environments. The district's inclusion of robust data systems will allow for data-driven decision-making as well as progress information for parents and students. The logic model is not comprehensive, but provides adequate explanation to move the system in its chosen direction.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has established performance outcomes for the required criteria as well as the postsecondary degree option. The postsecondary degree option represents the district's desire to make sure students are career ready and return to the area to spur economic growth. The district believes its efforts at personalized learning environments can increase student learning, make students more ready for college and careers, and ultimately provide a stronger workforce to improve the conditions of the town. The goals are achievable but not ambitious.</p>		

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has been engaged in reform efforts that are producing some improvements in student performance measures. The district has the highest need at two elementary where they have been efforts that are making an improvement. Further, the district has begun implementing the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework district-wide. This effort has not been correlated to any improvements so far. The district and the state provide adequate data to students and parents to inform</p>		

them of progress in the student performance measures.		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: The district has several communication options to share financial information with the district's stakeholders. While the district has many oversight and compliance procedures, it does not address the specific information that is available to the public.		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: The district has successfully administered previous reform grants which speaks to its infrastructure and capacity for implementing improvements. Further, there is state law and guidance from the state to support districts' efforts. Finally, the district is making necessary policy and procedural changes to address and support personalized learning environments.		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
(B)(4) Reviewer Comments: The district chose a representative approach to stakeholder engagement. It has demonstrated support from the local teachers, local and state officials, parents and community support groups.		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	4
(B)(5) Reviewer Comments: The district has provided a detailed chart that demonstrates its current reality, desired state, and gaps to be addressed. The chart (not labeled) provides a thorough contemplation of the issues to be addressed. The district states assumptions necessary for the successful implementation of the reform initiative.		

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	15
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: The district has identified its curricular and instructional alignment to the Common Core and College and Career Ready Standards adopted by the state. The district has addressed its focus on literacy in the K-3 environments and credit recovery in the high school. Further, it has focused on digital curriculum for all students. The district expects use project-based learning data and summative data to monitor student progress. students will also have a portfolio to update their progress. The district does not state whether the portfolio is digital so parents and other stakeholders can access it.		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: The district has indicated several professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators to support personalized learning environments. The district has planned to provide professional development that will support the understanding of personalized learning environments, the implementation of personalized learning environments, the use of technology to support personalized learning environments and the collection and analysis of data to monitor progress of students in their personalized learning environments.		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	13

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: The district has built, or plans to build, the necessary infrastructure to support personalized learning environments. The district has the necessary teams to support data analysis and instructional improvement at each school. It also has policies that support flexibility in credit attainment so students can progress onto new content when they demonstrate mastery. Also, the district has made necessary the needed resource allocations for students to fully engage in personalized learning environments. District personnel will be hired (a project director, a curriculum director, more deans) to support efforts.		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: The district is addressing its infrastructure to support this reform effort through increased technology support, professional development led by technology coaches, Bring Your Own Technology (BYOT) policies and online grade books. The district also plans to enhance its infrastructure through the creation and/or purchase of digital content to support personalized learning environments.		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The district plans to continue its use of the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP). This process aligns with state expectations for school improvement. The district will also use its District Leadership Team (DLT) and school building teams (BLT) for analysis of data and improvements efforts. The district will use its newly hired project director to organize the different teams and present a clear, coherent data analysis and well as report out to various stakeholders. Also, the data management systems and online grade books will allow for data analysis.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: The district will use its newly hired project director to organize the different teams and present a clear, coherent data analysis and well as report out to various stakeholders. It will also use the data management systems and online grade books to share information. The Stakeholder Advisory Committee will allow for representatives of various groups to coordinate with the project director to review data. Further, the district hopes a Communication Plan will allow for coordination of clear messages from various data teams in the district.		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: The district has established goals that address their current state, both by achievement expectations as well as community conditions. The goals presented are achievable, but not very ambitious. The reform effort being proposed is not proportional to the achievement level gains expected. This much effort could produce greater gains.		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments: The primary support for evaluation will come from the project director and an external evaluator. The district district will also rely on its newly hired curriculum director for review of content, and various site-based personnel such as the building leadership teams will provide data and evidence to the project director and the external evaluator. The Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) may also support program evaluation.		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
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(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The district does explain the the vast majority of funding is coming from the Race to the Top - District grant. The only other funding is the for the computer technology that has already been purchased by the district using its local funds. The district does not state funding from other sources, nor does it specify one-time versus ongoing investments and funding. The district provides ample explanation about its subprojects and their costs.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The district has indicated that it plans to use state funding recouped from students who will return to the district once it initiates the reform measure. While it is likely that some students will return to the district, and with them the lost funding, it is not financially sound to build sustainability efforts on projections.		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: The district has made a significant effort to partner with local support organizations to address other needs, besides academics, for its students. It is clear that socioeconomic and mental health issues impact student learning, so the district is prudent is partnering to address these concerns. The district has demonstrated a gap between what is currently available for students and what students actually need. This proposal will work to address these concerns with the greater impact for the least amount of resource allocation.		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: The district has met the threshold of developing a system to support personalized learning environments. It is focused on the necessary core assurances as required by this application through the goals it set. The district has also made a concerted effort to create a variety of professional development opportunities to build the capacity of the teachers and administrators who will lead this effort. The district has attended to the technology components of this effort by increased bandwidth, digital content, online grade books, robust data management systems, and device purchases. Further, it has worked with community partners to build a coalition of support and guidance to continually improve student performance.		

Total	210	154
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form



Application #0890OH-2 for Lancaster City Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Lancaster City School District presented a thoroughly comprehensive vision that exceeded the criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to create personalized learning environments which prepare each student for college and/or career through a rigorous curriculum based on the State Common Core and College and Career Ready Standards personalized learning environments will include a system of blended learning options and project-based learning in which the students meet individual goals and learning supports to ensure equity for all students students will obtain and practice skills to think critically, collaborate with peers and experts, and use those skills to construct solutions to problems, and communicate results to an audience extensive professional development opportunities will be offered to build student, teacher and principal capacity in areas of personalized learning environments, and effectively using the data system to evaluate student progression school district expressed its commitment to recruiting and retaining highly effective teachers, principals, and support staff lowest performing schools and highest need schools will be targeted as first priority. <p>The applicant provided clear, ambitious yet achievable goals with a strong committed to helping students monitor their individual learning goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> plan to increase student engagement through personalized learning environment, project-based learning, and blended learning options (a combination of online instruction and classroom interactive lessons) engage students in their own learning as they make connections between the classroom and the world's global economy increasing learning supports for students and creating personalized learning environments that focus on 21st Century Skills while empowering students to be college and career ready ambitious goals include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of students will graduate college and career ready 100% of teachers and administration will be motivated and effective robust data system will be readily available to all stakeholders and increase their access to communication and school data student achievement will continuously improve in each content area and subgroup, and student growth will be maximized for each student yearly thus eliminating a low performing school as defined in the grant. <p>The extensive vision presented addresses the district's commitment to improve student achievement through personalized learning environments by removing significant barriers to learning.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicants' intentionality in implementing their vision through four project areas is solid and cohesive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> students will be able to demonstrate mastery of the new Common Core Standards and 21st Century Skills (creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making communication, collaboration, and learning) all students will learn in a personalized learning environment all stakeholders will have access to an interoperable data system that is easily accessible and which enables students, parents, teachers, and administrators to make informed decisions and customize student learning 		

community confidence and support in public education will increase by meeting the needs of our schools and students.

All students within the school district will fully participate in the personalized learning environment:

- eight elementary schools (Cedar Heights; East; Medill; Sanderson; South; Tallmadge/ Preschool; Tarhe; and, West
- two middle schools (General Sherman Jr. High; and, Thomas Ewing Jr. High)
- one comprehensive high school (Lancaster High School)
- enrollment in the elementary school s range from 288-433; middle schools enrollment ranges from 700-706; and, the high school enrollment is 1,623
- total participating students is 5,979 with 51% of students receiving free and reduced lunch.

The plan documented several factors germane to the district's region that impact student learning and perpetuate the achievement gap:

- district has high mobility rates ranging from 9.3-19.5%, which impacts continuity of educational services
- an unemployment rate significantly higher the state of Ohio – 8.6% and a job growth rate extremely below 1% (-31%)
- 25% increase in the number of economically disadvantaged students (based on families qualifying for Child Support, Food Assistance and Ohio Work First Programs through the Department of Jobs and Family Services)
- many of these students come to school with learning gaps and deficits in their social emotional development
- grant will help schools better identify students with learning gaps or have social emotional needs that impeding learning
- priority will be given to providing appropriate learning supports and counseling services necessary to increase student achievement to bridge the gap and having students on track for college and career and graduation requirements.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)

10

10

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presented an exhaustive plan to meaningful reform than can be scaled up and sustained:

- state and national policies and standards are providing the foundation for educational reform to increase student achievement
- plan includes four elements leading to meaningful reform:
 - adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college, the workplace, and engage in the global society
 - building data systems that measure student growth and success, inform teachers and principals with data about how they can improve instruction, and allow students and parents to view their own student performance data and take ownership of the child's learning
 - recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most
 - turning around lowest-achieving schools.

The four elements will be executed through the four primary plan goals:

1. students demonstrating mastery of the new Common Core standards and 21st Century Skills
 - a. comprehensive development of teacher and principal evaluation systems with defined rubric designations: Ineffective, Developing, Proficient, and Accomplished
 - b. ratings are based on performance measures and student growth measures
 - c. establish a Resident Educator System to gain Ohio teaching certificate, support new and underperforming teachers
 - d. develop a mentoring program for teachers new to the district and to support educators who do not qualify for the Resident Educator System
 - e. professional development in team building, data analysis, formative assessment, and differentiated instruction
 - f. district will encourage and reward accomplished teachers who take positions in lowest performing schools
 - g. K-3 reading teachers encouraged to gain reading endorsement to ensure students meet proficiency by the end of grade three (Ohio Third Grade Guarantee); hiring practices will require completion of reading endorsement by end of first year
 - h. ineffective principals will not return to building level assignments
 - i. deans will be added to support principals with new evaluation system
 - j. mentoring program for principals will be added with grant funds.
2. all student will learn in a personalized learning environment

- a. train teachers to deliver personalized instruction
- b. hire academic and technology coaches to support teachers in the classroom with job embedded professional development
- c. supply students with mobile devices to make personalized, blended learning a reality
- d. personalized learning with provide remediation and enrichment based on students' needs
- e. reduction of student-teacher ratios in math and reading in low achieving/high need schools in grades K-2.
3. all stakeholders will have access to an interoperable data system that's easily accessible
 - a. data systems in place to provide intervention services for struggling students and gifted students
 - b. implemented STAR Enterprise System (2012-13) in grades K-8, which is a universal screener that measures student growth in reading and math
 - c. Reading Academy is used to screen for reading in secondary schools
 - d. development of a robust data system will occur through grant funds and purchased through a third party system and be interoperable through current data system
 - e. parent and student access to online grade book to monitor students' progress toward college and career goals
 - f. updated information available through district's website
 - g. creation of online registration and scheduling for easy access for parents and students.
4. increase community confidence in public education by meeting the needs of the schools and students
 - a. expansion of communication methods to reach parents and community through mass media
 - b. informational messages about risk factors, available resources, reducing stigma, and delivering educational interventions
 - c. create an Advisory Committee including parents, members of the community, and a student representative to gain pertinent information needed to drive program and decision-making
 - d. screen preschoolers at lowest achieving schools and increase accessibility of preK programs/screenings for families

work with community partners (United Way's Education Committee, Head Start, and Fairfield County Adult and Children's First Committee) to enhance their educational programs by aligning preschool standards and resources.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	10
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant clearly identified ambitious yet achievable performance growth measures for specific school groups:

- presented an overarching goal that students will be college and career ready to enter the 21st century global economy upon graduation by increasing 21st the number of project-based options for students, the number of blended learning options, the number of students who take advantage of the Flex Credit option; and, the number of students who have learning/career plans upon graduation
- increase the number of students who graduate college and career ready by increasing student enrollment in military, college, technical programs, and apprenticeships after graduating from high school; reduce percentage of students taking remedial courses upon entering college; increase percentage of students who finish college with two or four year degrees; and, increase percentage of students who are licensed or certified through district's career technical programs.

The plan demonstrates performance on summative assessments clearly identifying proficiency status and areas of growth:

- district aggregate performance presented for past three years - 2010: district met 15/19 indicators for minimum proficiency; 2011: district met 16/19 indicators; 2012: district met 18/19 indicators
- weakest identified area is grade five where students have consistently scored below or just above minimum standards in all tested areas
- ambitious goals: meet 100% of academic content standards at each grade levels; increase grade five math scores by 5% by the end of the grant period.

Goals for decreasing achievement gaps were appropriate:

- data shows that economically disadvantaged, multi-racial, and students with disabilities in grade three show a significant gap in reading and math
- data shows that grade five students in math have performed significantly below standard for the past three years
- in value added data, gifted and economically disadvantaged students are not consistently making a yearly growth rate

at the elementary level

- ambitious goals: decrease gap in grade three reading and math subgroups by at least 5%; make at least a year's worth of growth for the subgroups of gifted and economically disadvantaged at the elementary levels.

Goals to appropriately address the graduation rate were included in the plan:

- current overall graduation rate is 88.5%; multi-racial subgroup - 100%; economically disadvantaged subgroup – 84.6%; special education students – 75%
- most school groups remain steady except the economically disadvantaged and special education subgroups which dropped 10% and 6%, respectively
- ambitious goals: increase the overall graduation rates between all students to meet state standards of 90%; and, reduce the gap in the graduation rates between all students and the subgroups of economically disadvantaged and special education at 3% by the end of the grant.

College enrollment rate goals are to increase student enrollment increase the number of students who graduate college and career ready by increasing student enrollment in military, college, technical programs, and apprenticeships after graduating from high school.

Plans to address post-secondary rates include acquiring a monitoring system to measure graduation rates of our students entering a two or four year college; reduce percentage of students taking remedial courses upon entering college; increase percentage of students who finish college with two or four year degrees; and, increase percentage of students who are licensed or certified through district's career technical programs.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	14

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presented extensive school performance data that boasts an outstanding track record of success while also establishing an improvement process with a focus on improved student achievement:

district's performance index has risen steadily for the past three years (2010: district met 15/19 indicators for minimum proficiency; 2011: district met 16/19 indicators; 2012: district met 18/19 indicators)

- district has increased its ability to meet more academic indicators over the last three years moving from earning 22 indicators to earning 24 indicators on the annual report card
- high school making small gains on the ACT (+.3)
- value-added numbers indicate district is improving in its ability to impact student growth
- implementation of the Ohio Improvement Process provides a solid framework for decision-making within the district through teacher-based teams, data teams, formative assessments, and data analysis
- access to college-level or accelerated courses through dual enrollment at local universities and community colleges: in 2011-12 over 60 students were enrolled in eight different courses yielding over 500 quarter hours of college credit
- over 189 advanced placement tests were administered to 102 district high school students
- a Virtual High School offers a variety of high school courses through an online learning approach, which allows credit recovery or enrichment beyond the scope of the curriculum (25 seats per semester).

The district's efforts toward achieving ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools are commendable:

- two schools classified as lowest-achieving within the district: South Elementary and West Elementary
- school low performing due to mobility rates and the number of economically disadvantaged students
- South has made continuous improvement over the past three years due to intervention-based program (targeted and data-driven)
- West has struggled to obtain consistency in academic achievement (beginning to implement intervention-based program)

in 2012-13)

- district will implement Response to Intervention (RTI) within the school schedule to address interventions/remediation needed K-12
- high school provides multiple career and technical programs funded through the Carl D. Perkins Grant.

Student performance is shared with stakeholders in a variety of ways:

- students are informed of their performance data through the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) assessment reports, STAR reading and math reports given by classroom teachers K-8, an online grade book program, and individual classroom portfolios
- teachers communicate learning targets and student progress toward meeting those goals
- longitudinal performance data are available through web-based portal provided by ODE
- formative and summative assessments are analyzed by teachers and teacher-based teams; data is used to drive instruction and identify student interventions
- parents receive student data information through letters from ODE and have access to student's grades through the online grade books; parent-teacher conferences; student-led conferences.

Selection criteria clearly met.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Transparent processes were thoroughly communicated in the plan:

- Board of Education has six standing committees that meet monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly and have the following functions:
 - communications – recommends communication strategies for district
 - finance – reviews revenue and expenditures of the district and overall financial plan
 - personnel – reviews procedures of selecting and hiring faculty and staff and discusses staffing needs
 - policy – recommends policies as guidelines for the operation of the school district
 - program – reviews and recommends textbook selection, new programs, curriculum and assessment modifications, test results, various data elements, and academic progress
 - support services – reviews and recommends plans for facility improvements, food service, transportation, and technology operations
- each committee is comprised of two board members, administrators, representation from teacher and support staff unions and community members
- the Financial Oversight Committee serves as the audit committee meeting twice yearly
- district's website offers non-financial information (board policies, monthly board minutes, community engagement updates, school forms, bus routes, school supply lists, and menus); financial information (five-year forecast, the annual budget document, the comprehensive financial report)
- district's staff intranet offers employee information such as district forms, calendars, handbooks, and negotiated agreements from all bargaining unit members)
- One Call Now system communicates information via phone or text
- Board meetings are televised on the local television channel

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	7
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The plan provides sufficient information about its autonomy and flexibility to fully implement personalized learning environments based on previous experience with large grants:

- Elementary and Secondary Counseling Grant – 2007-2010: counseling programs to support district's goal in reducing risk behaviors in students
- Transforming Teaching and Learning Grant – 2011: improve student learning through the creation of technology rich learning environments; incorporated collaborative, job-embedded professional development using research-based methods to personalize learning environments
- The Technology Plan – 2012: adoption of 1:1 initiative for Lancaster High School to provide iPads for every teacher and every student; professional development on best practices is ongoing
- Board of Education supports integration of technology and understands its impact on student achievement; amended its

<p>policies in 2011 to enable students to bring their own technology to school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State has begun efforts to provide a framework for districts to move toward blended learning models (Ohio Senate Bill 316) • district added a credit flexibility policy so that students can create their own learning paths for credit or demonstrate mastery of the course content in a variety of ways. 		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	6
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant presented reasonable support from a variety of stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent along with the president of the teachers' union, central office directors and the executive officers of the local teachers' union collaborated to design a plan to incorporate personalized learning environments • letters supporting the plan were written by: Lancaster Mayor; president, academic boosters; student leadership board – Lancaster High School; Fairfield Medical Center; State representative; and, a receipt letter from the ODE declined to comment on the application. 		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan clearly outlines the steps it will implement to accomplish its vision of creating a school climate of personalized learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • job-embedded professional development for teachers to learn and implement new instructional practices • high school professional development has begun due to Transforming Teaching, a Learning Grant and through the use of Virtual High School • professional development plan will incorporate best practices lessons and provide collaborative time needed to share with other teachers • use field experts in personalized learning and blended learning to continue moving forward • all teachers participated in Robert Marzano's High-Yield Instructional Strategies training, which allows the district effective use of the train-the-trainer approach • employ a coaching model to embed professional development within the practice of teaching and learning and lead to sustainable results • K-2 academic coaches will work with teachers in low achieving, high needs schools • mentors will be added to work with new principals • strong leadership to help plan, implement, and deliver the goals in the grant (hire project manager). <p>Specific gaps and weaknesses addressed thoroughly in the plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • counselors not available on a daily basis for all schools • no current blended learning options • no current project-based learning opportunities • use of mobile devices for instruction and intervention is limited • professional development will need to continue to have full support K-12 • no current mentoring program for teachers or principals new to the district, on a supplementary contract, or rated as ineffective • need to create a robust data system • no technology learning coaches • a district intervention/program inventory will be completed <p>A detailed plan to address the weakness and gaps are expected to be remedied through grant funds.</p>		

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
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(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district's plan encompasses strong outcomes for preparing college and career ready students through personalized learning environments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • district re-defining emphasis in preK-3 settings to include a strong literacy foundation expecting all students to complete grade three reading on grade level; continue building literacy skills through grade 12 where complexity of text is significant • professional development on reading comprehension strategies: metacognition, schema, inferring, questioning, determining importance, visualizing, synthesizing (Tanny McGregor) • full implementation of Common Core State College and Career Ready standards • relevant, real world content for mathematical practice • deepening students' understanding of concepts as outlined in new curriculum • interactive preschool curriculum based on Early Learning Content Standards • creation of online K-1 blended learning curriculum • response to invention programs to reach high needs students • expansion of credit recovery programs • continue utilizing hands-on and project-based learning in career technical programs (cosmetology, broadcasting, auto mechanics, and culinary arts) • develop robust data system accessible to teachers, students, and parents to allow accurate monitoring of students' progress toward individual goals • facilitate learning for all students to move at varying paces and employ various learning strategies. 		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	17
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Solid learning opportunities and professional development opportunities for teachers and students were enumerated in the plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adoption of Common Core State College and Career Ready standards • ODE adoption of new science, social studies, fine arts, world language and financial literacy curriculum • assess needs of staff through needs assessment to help teachers transition from former curriculum to new curriculum • technology training for staff to provide ample support in personalized learning environments, blended learning, and project-based learning • increasing 21st Century Skills (creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making communication, collaboration, and learning) • student learning outcomes – learning how to measure student growth, providing feedback to students and parents • grading practices – standards based grading systems will be developed <p>Public outreach and communication opportunities will include: extending learning outside of the school day through online tutorials, after-school tutoring, or summer study programs; continue to seek stakeholder feedback throughout grant period; and, create a Welcome Center with digital access and a central location to facilitate school registration and scheduling.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	13
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant identified multiple opportunities for stakeholders to access the curriculum and student performance data while also addressing infrastructure capacity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all students will have access to curricular content and learning resources regardless of their level of income, both in and out of school • all students will be equipped with personal technology devices that allows them to thrive in the personalized learning 		

<p>environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> remediation and acceleration available at home and at school to complete work toward college and career goals anytime anywhere district contracted with Time Warner Cable in 2011 to upgrade its fiber infrastructure to support significant increase of mobile access district increased internet band width from 100MB to 500MB summer 2011 district upgraded to a robust wireless network at the high school plans to invest in more connectivity to accomplish its curricular goals employ technology learning coaches to work with teachers in the design and implementation of personalized, digital curriculum, and project-based learning activities the state of Ohio requires that all school districts submit data regularly through interoperable systems existing organization provides computer services to its member K-12 districts including: accounting, payroll, student grading, student scheduling, electronic grade books, professional development, internet, local area network support, library automation, and EMIS reporting to the ODE. 		
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(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's proposal provides a clear picture of the organizational structure proposed to maintain fidelity to its plan:

- the district's central office provides services and supports to all participating schools
- central office and the Board of Education worked collaboratively with all stakeholders on revising policies and setting the direction for the district through multiple committees
- the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) is the structure used to continually improve its performance to become a high-achieving school district, which includes:
 - access to high-quality instruction for all student groups in keeping with federal and state laws
 - aligns vision, mission, and philosophy
 - is continuous and recursive
 - relies on quality data interpretation
 - is collaborative and collegial
 - ensures communication with those who are affected by the success of the district
 - produces a focused, integrated plan that directs all district work and resources
 - establishes the expectation for substantive changes in student performance and adult practice
- OIP created a framework for shared decision-making, the District Leadership Team with representatives from each stakeholder group
- Building Leadership Teams (school based) take direction from the district team with flexibility to customize plans and goals for each building based on their individual building data, personnel, and needs
- additional specialized teams include special education, grade level coordinators, department coordinators, master teachers, technology committees, and textbook committees provide feedback and participate in decision-making.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The plan demonstrates a strong structure for continuous improvement:

- the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) is the structure used to continually improve its performance to become a high-achieving school district, which includes:
 - access to high-quality instruction for all student groups in keeping with federal and state laws
 - aligns vision, mission, and philosophy
 - is continuous and recursive
 - relies on quality data interpretation
 - is collaborative and collegial
 - ensures communication with those who are affected by the success of the district
 - produces a focused, integrated plan that directs all district work and resources
 - establishes the expectation for substantive changes in student performance and adult practice

- OIP created a framework for shared decision-making, the District Leadership Team with representatives from each stakeholder group
- Building Leadership Teams (school based) take direction from the district team with flexibility to customize plans and goals for each building based on their individual building data, personnel, and needs

An established decision-making process using annual and longitudinal data was outlined:

- Stage 1: needs assessment, priorities established
- Stage 2: building plan based upon the goals, strategies, and adult and student indicators; action steps and tasks specific to the needs of the students in the building
- horizontal and vertical teacher leadership teams are established in each building – meet bi-weekly
- school and district teams use tools such as: walkthrough forms, surveys, and focused groups to gather data to inform instructional practices
- progress monitoring is recorded through comprehensive continuous improvement planning.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)

5

4

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A clear pathway to engage stakeholders includes:

- establish a Stakeholder Advisory Committee consisting of representatives from each stakeholder group to establish the direction for the implementation of the personalized learning project, review progress, and make recommendations for the community impact pieces of the grant
- the grant project director will maintain and establish working relationships with colleges, community, businesses, parents, and act a liaison for the district
- a communication plan will be created that mirrors the district's communication plan to include all internal and external stakeholders
- quarterly Race to the Top-District update in the district's newsletter, Chalkmarks, which is distributed to all Lancaster City residents
- social networking along with the district and school websites will include all sections about the grant's implementation and progress.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)

5

5

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's ambitious yet achievable goals include:

- meet 100% of academic content standards at each grade levels; increase grade five math scores by 5% by the end of the grant period
- decrease gap in grade three reading and math subgroups by at least 5%; make at least a year's worth of growth for the subgroups of gifted and economically disadvantaged at the elementary levels
- increase the overall graduation rates between all students to meet state standards of 90%; and, reduce the gap in the graduation rates between all students and the subgroups of economically disadvantaged and special education at 3% by the end of the grant
- College enrollment rate goals are to increase student enrollment increase the number of students who graduate college and career ready by increasing student enrollment in military, college, technical programs, and apprenticeships after graduating from high school.
- Plans to address post-secondary rates include acquiring a monitoring system to measure graduation rates of our students entering a two or four year college; reduce percentage of students taking remedial courses upon entering college; increase percentage of students who finish college with two or four year degrees; and, increase percentage of students who are licensed or certified through district's career technical programs.
- all students be served by highly effective teachers and principals
- all subgroups of students (economically disadvantaged, special education, and multi-racial students) served by highly effective teachers and principals.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

5

4

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The plan contains reasonable efforts to determine the effectiveness of the grant funds and proposed programming:

- evaluations of professional development by teachers to generate ideas about the level of support needed to continue, level of usage in the classroom, and how it will support student learning
- evaluations of professional development with specific questions about technology usage: connections to implementation in the classroom, use of, lack of new ideas and transformations
- at least quarterly progress monitoring on how programs/professional development affect adult and student implementation and progress
- cost analysis of each activity and its impact on teacher and student progress
- use of quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure outcomes of the plan are being met
- will also use continuous improvement measures as outlined in OIP:
 - OIP created a framework for shared decision-making, the District Leadership Team with representatives from each stakeholder group
 - Building Leadership Teams (school based) take direction from the district team with flexibility to customize plans and goals for each building based on their individual building data, personnel, and needs.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan clearly identifies all funds that will support the project and provides an extensive rationale for investments and priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • budget directly links to each of the four projects identified in the plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ student mastery of Common Core standards and 21st Century skills – increase the number of students who are college and career ready by recruiting and retaining effective teachers and leaders (\$7,581,072.00) ◦ personalized learning environments – increase the number of students who are college and career ready through a robust data system and communication plan available to all stakeholders (\$10,943,785.00) ◦ interoperable data system – a robust data system and communication plan available to all stakeholders (\$2,160,937.00) ◦ community confidence – data system available to all (560,360.00) • first year of grant funds will be allocated for technology infrastructure upgrades, hiring and training staff, and gearing up for full implementation by the end of the grant • project director, curriculum coordinator, and coaching positions will not be needed beyond the grant • positions that remain include the dean of students, technology staff, and the central registration clerk and will be included as positions in the districts five year forecast • district has already committed to purchasing one iPad for each high school student through a lease agreement with Apple (\$450,000 assumed by the school district). <p>Itemized costs with descriptions and cost assumptions were comprehensively addressed.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant expects to maintain the high-quality plan by predicting the recurring cost beyond the grant within its presented budget, which is forecasted in the district's five-year funding plan. There is indication that most of the money allocated in the budget will build sustainability of the transformative changed needed to implement personalized education. The plan states that the district is committed to carrying on the transformative changes. Certain positions will be eliminated at the conclusion of the grant (project director, curriculum coordinator, and coaching positions). The district also hopes to regain students that left for open enrollment in other institutions and the additional per-pupil funding will help to sustain grant efforts.</p> <p>Data systems, technicians, and infrastructure will be sustained through the general fund, e-rate reimbursements, and increased enrollment. The Welcome Center will be sustained beyond the grant and supported by the general fund.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's plan describes its intentions to increase capabilities to service the socio-emotional needs of students through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • add four elementary counselor or social work positions • provide early identification and intervention with students • provide professional development to increase student attendance (interventions) • provide additional teacher training on mental health programs such a Second Step, Talking about Touching (Personal Body Safety) • implement Positive Behavior Interventions and Support s in all schools with appropriate training • early intervention of problem behavior issues using staff development, screening, individual and group counseling • zero tolerance for bullying through Steps to Respect training • implement Success groups at the elementary level led by counselors • create a district infrastructure to prevent and address barriers to learning by developing and implementing the RTI process at the elementary level through RTI team and plans • counselors will create effective home-school communication and increase parent involvement. <p>Plan identifies four population-level desired results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • elementary students K-5: educational; decrease the number of risk-taking behaviors of students as measured by discipline referrals, attendance rates, and student survey results • elementary students K-5: educational; increase mental health services, establish RTI, PBIS in all buildings and provide training for staff • elementary students K-5: family and community; increase home and school connection • elementary students K-5: educational; increase achievement 		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant comprehensively addressed the criteria for Absolute Priority 1 by building on the core educational assurance through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan thoroughly addresses four primary project outputs and strategies as a part of a comprehensive, high quality plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ to create personalized learning environments which prepare each student for college and/or career through a rigorous curriculum based on the State Common Core and College and Career Ready Standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ all student taught by an effective teacher ▪ provide building support for administrators ▪ provide tuition reimbursement for K-3 reading endorsement ▪ future teachers required to complete reading endorsement ▪ incentive system for teachers in low-achieving schools ◦ personalized learning environments will include a system of blended learning options and project-based learning in which the students meet individual goals and learning supports to ensure equity for all students ◦ students will obtain and practice skills to think critically, collaborate with peers and experts, and use those skills to construct solutions to problems, and communicate results to an audience ◦ extensive professional development opportunities will be offered to build student, teacher and principal capacity in areas of personalized learning environments, and effectively using the data system to evaluate student progression ◦ school district expressed its commitment to recruiting and retaining highly effective teachers, principals, and 		

- support staff
- lowest performing schools and highest need schools will be targeted as first priority.

The applicant provided clear, ambitious yet achievable goals with a strong committed to helping students monitor their individual learning goals:

- plan to increase student engagement through personalized learning environment, project-based learning, and blended learning options (a combination of online instruction and classroom interactive lessons)
- engage students in their own learning as they make connections between the classroom and the world's global economy
- increasing learning supports for students and creating personalized learning environments that focus on 21st Century Skills while empowering students to be college and career ready
- ambitious goals include:
 - 100% of students will graduate college and career ready
 - 100% of teachers and administration will be motivated and effective
 - robust data system will be readily available to all stakeholders and increase their access to communication and school data
 - student achievement will continuously improve in each content area and subgroup, and student growth will be maximized for each student yearly thus eliminating a low performing school as defined in the grant.

Total	210	182
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0890OH-3 for Lancaster City Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant articulates a coherent and comprehensive vision to provide the students in the community access to a more relevant and personalized learning educational experience. This vision is grounded in the realities of the socio-economic challenges that exist in the community. The applicant makes the connection between graduation rates, the impact it has on employment as well as the number of students who leave the community. The applicant sees this as an opportunity to not only assist the students in the district but serve as a foundation to strengthen the community as a whole with more educated and prepared individuals to take on the jobs available in the community and ultimately lift the cycle of poverty. The vision expressed by the applicant speaks to a vision that will not only impact the lives of the students being served but can also have long lasting impact on the community. The vision described by the applicant includes building upon the four core educational assurance areas including a focus on both the lowest performing schools and students with the highest needs, making data driven decisions derived from a robust longitudinal data system, effective teachers and implementing a rigorous education through the adoption of Common Core and College and career ready standards.		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:		

The applicant has decided to include all of the students attending school in the district. It was determined all of the students should participate to ensure equity in access to a personalized educational learning opportunity. Based on the numbers provided, the students meet the criteria of low income families in that an average of 51% are eligible for free and reduced lunch.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)

10

7

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant thoroughly describes the ways in which it plans to create meaningful reform in the district. Specifically, the applicant speaks to four ways in which they will accomplish this goal. First, the goal to ensure all students demonstrate master of the Common Core Standards and 21st Century skills. Within this goal is the focus on teaching and leading and ensuring educators are well prepared and placed in the areas they are needed most. Second is providing students with a personalized learning environment. The applicant demonstrates a clear understanding in the need to not only bridge the digital divide but also provide the access to students the academic continuum. This includes students with high needs as well as gifted students. Third, is access to an interoperable data system that can be used by all stakeholders to make informed decisions and customize student learning. Fourth and final in increasing confidence in public education by improving communication and processes for parents and students. This section includes ways in which the applicant will help impact low performing schools by strengthening PreK programming.

While the applicant presents strong plans and actions to be followed to enact meaningful reform for students, parents and educators, the proposal lacks a high quality plan that includes a specific timeline and delineation of who is responsible for carrying out these actions.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)

10

10

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance based on the goals set and high quality plan that provides an exhaustive list of actions to be taken, the person (s) responsible and a timeline associated with each of them.

While the applicant has continued to make improvements over the last three years and arguably has higher student achievement than many districts across the country, they maintain high expectations for all students and acknowledge the areas that need improvement. Specifically, the applicant includes data from 2009 in which according to state standards, only 15 of the 19 indicators were met. By 2012, 18 of the 19 were met. They also point out however that 5th grade is the area that requires additional support based on test scores that are lower across the board as compared to other grades.

The applicant has very specific goals in the areas of performance on summative tests, decreasing achievement gaps, raising graduation rates, increasing college and other post secondary enrollment and beginning to track post secondary attainment. Part of the goals to address post secondary attainment is also addressing the need to reduce the number of students who require remedial work.

This applicant is very clear about its goals and has a comprehensive, high quality plan to achieve those goals. They also demonstrate a very well thought out, comprehensive look at the needs of the students and community and seeks ways to fill gaps.

One issue in question is whether or not the academic goals are ambitious. For example, the applicant has identified the 5th grade as an area of challenge. To that end one of the goals is to increase the Math scores for 5th graders by just 5% by the end of the grant period is ambitious. Similarly, the applicant plans to reduce the gap in graduation rates between all students and the subgroups of economically disadvantaged and special needs by just 3% at the end of the grant. These goals, based on the overall level of achievement in the district and the overall vision of the project, these academic goals seem unambitious and inconsistent.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	12

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a clear record of success over the past 3 (the 4th year is not provided) years of raising achievement in

areas such as Reading and Math, as well as high school graduation rates. They have also demonstrated success with special needs students making AYP for the first time in many years based on utilizing co-teaching models.

In the area of achievement ambitious and significant reforms for students in the applicant's lowest performing schools, the applicant indicates that of its two lowest performing, one has been able to raise achievement through the use of an intervention program based on student data. Such interventions are targeted and measured. The other school is now in its second year of implementing such interventions.

The applicant does not make clear whether student performance data is made available to students. Grades are made available through the online grade book. Performance data is however made available to educators at the building level and used to inform instruction.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)

5

2

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a number of ways in which stakeholders can access information about budget, policies and programs and services offered by the district. This includes the website, intranet, automated calls, regular board meetings broadcasted on local television and an annual meeting. The applicant does state that certain agreements and salary schedules are available through the district's staff intranet.

The applicant does not make clear if school level expenditures, especially any actual personnel salaries, are made available to the public.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a clear path in which the state's legal and statutory requirements allow for sufficient autonomy to implement personalized learning environments. Examples of this are as follows:

- Evidence of securing grants and implementing independent from the state
- state law that allows for blended learning opportunities and waiving of student teacher ratios
- district level policies that are consistent with the direction the applicant is moving in in terms of use of technology (ie student's personal mobile devices)

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)

10

5

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

It is evident that students, teachers and administrators in participating schools played a significant role in the writing of the applicant's proposal. This process was thorough and took into account the thoughts, especially the selected students, into account throughout the process. What is not evident is whether the larger community had access to the process of writing or responding to the proposal.

The local union president has signed the application. There are letters of support included from two elected officials, a booster club of one of the schools and a hospital. There is also a letter from student leaders thanking administrators and educators and encouraging their participating in the grant process but does not describe support for the project.

It appears the applicant had a strong internal process for the application but did not extend this process to external stakeholders.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides an analysis on their current status in implementing personalized learning environments. Specifically, the applicant provides a chart that identifies current programming, needs and gaps and the proposed plans to fill such gaps. Missing is the timeline associated with implementing these goals and identifying the person(s) responsible for carrying out such actions.

The applicant is clear on what is in existence and where they need to go in order to create a personalized learning environment for all students.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	19
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has a thorough plan to ensure students have access to high quality personalized learning environments through a number of paths.</p> <p>Understanding the key role teachers play in ensuring student success, the applicant first plans to train educators on tools and strategies to best meet the needs of students.</p> <p>To achieve personalized learning environments, the applicant will provide blended learning program options that provide a mix of online learning as well as face to face instruction from teachers. They believe this approach will allow students to better master content, stay on track for graduation and remain college and career ready. Through the use of digital and in person resources, students will be able to move through curriculum at their own pace and receive the level of support needed, whether remediation or acceleration is needed.</p> <p>The applicant has a special focus on bringing students back into the district by offering a menu of programming options more relevant to students. They believe this will not only provide better instructional approaches for current students but will also attract home schoolers and students who have chosen other options to come back into the district.</p> <p>The strategies the applicant will employ include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blended learning with self-paced approaches • flexible scheduling (to allow for more project based opportunities, deeper understanding of content, and for students with extenuating circumstances to attend at their pace) • Interdisciplinary project based learning • multiple opportunities to access content in diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives that deepen learning • The use of mobile devices to support learning • Offer coursework through the Virtual High School Collaborative • Dual enrollment through Ohio University and Hocking College • College level and accelerated courses • Flex credits <p>In addition to creating this system that is much more attractive to students, the applicant will ensure students will have access to student data that will also guide their personalized learning experiences. With teacher guidance, the applicant points out that students will be able to monitor their own progress and set goals for learning. All as they move towards college and career readiness.</p> <p>To show mastery in a number of ways, students will be tested, complete projects, and will keep an updated portfolio.</p> <p>The applicant indicates that for high needs students, the opportunity to participate in blended learning and participate in face to face and self paced approaches will enable them to fill gaps. There is not a level of detail to determine this approach alone will ensure this population is on track toward meeting college and career ready standards.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In addition to providing personalized learning environments for all students, the applicant's major focus of the project is to ensure teachers are well prepared to be effective in the classrooms. The applicant and its educators were already involved in an intense professional development program. The applicant has determined that additional support is needed to specifically meet the needs of this project. As a result, teachers will participate in job embedded professional development on an ongoing basis. They will be trained in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalized learning environments and ways in which to use strategies to meet the needs of students • Adapting instructional tools to enable students to participate in common and individual tasks • Alignment in Common Core Standards • Technology usage as it relates to providing a personalized learning environment <p>The applicant has an extensive plan to ensure teachers and principals have the job embedded professional developem as well</p>		

as coaches to ensure mastery the skills needed to deliver effective teaching and personalized learning environments. Additionally, the applicant plans to provide additional support to teachers and principals through providing mentors. The use of evaluations will also help teachers and principal receive feedback and make any necessary adjustments to instruction and leadership in order to meet the academic needs of students.

A high quality plan to ensure all students have access to effective teachers is not evident.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	10
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has indicated they have organized the central office to provide support services to all participating schools and this structure has allowed participation at all levels, meeting on a regular basis and making policy changes based on the direction of the district. Although not explicit, it appears this structure is set up to support the overall vision of this project to increase personalized learning opportunities for all students.</p> <p>The applicant indicates that leadership teams have been set up both at the district and school level. It is not clear the level of flexibility and accountability as the applicant points out that the BLT take direction from the DLT but can customize the plans and goals at the building level based on data and personnel. The applicant notes that parents school staff can provide input on the district calendar through an online voting system, and personnel decisions through the district's personnel committee. Based on these factors, it does not appear that school leadership teams have sufficient autonomy desired.</p> <p>The applicant does indicate processes in which students are given the opportunity to earn credit based on demonstrated mastery not the amount of time spent on a topic. This is demonstrated through its offering of flex credits and flexible scheduling. In addition, mastery can also be demonstrated multiple times and multiple comparable ways as noted by the work currently happening by the Grading committee. This committee has offered solutions such as allowing students to re-take tests and re-do projects without penalty. In addition, students will be able to demonstrate mastery through technological, real world and other mediums.</p> <p>The applicant notes that for students with special needs the district has embraced a co-teaching model that allows students to remain in an inclusion model while receiving the necessary support. Additionally, the district has instituted the Response to Intervention model that enables them to assess student need based on data then respond accordingly. Additionally, other sub groups that may have other needs, small group activities, credit recovery and test taking courses are available.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant is committed to ensuring students are able to access technology anytime anywhere. The following policies have been enacted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students are permitted to take technology home as needed to complete digital work 2. The district created a Bring Your Own Technology 3. The district has technology available in building media centers and classrooms for students who cannot bring their own 4. Students are able to sign technology out to foster learning 5. Teachers will design digital content that will allow students to load it on the take home technology 6. Adequate time will be permitted during after school hours if a learning activity requires internet access <p>The applicant recognizes the need to ensure tech support is available to all users and has determined that at least one person will be hired to work during evening hours to provide support. It is of concern whether this is sufficient staffing to address the needs of potentially thousands of students and teachers who may need support at a given time, especially at the beginning.</p> <p>The applicant describes a system that will ease the school registration process for parents but does not address a system that will allow them to export their information in an open data format to use the data in other systems.</p> <p>The applicant also fails to describe the process by which students, parents and other stakeholders will have the appropriate levels of training and technical support.</p> <p>The applicant does mention a robust interoperable data system that includes many sources of information including, human resources data, accounting payroll, etc.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has already implemented a robust system for continuous improvement. The process includes, assessing the needs, developing a focused plan, implementation and monitoring the process. The process described is revisited and revised annually through the DLTs and BLTs. Teams meet as frequently as weekly to participate in the improvement process. Areas being considered by all of the teams include, Data and Decision Making, Goal Setting, Instruction and Learning, Community Engagement, Resource Management and Governance. The applicant has determined that the RTTD Project Director will work within this process to implement a continuous improvement process as designed by RTTD grant. The applicant plans to publicly share the information as a part of the district's communication plan.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not describe a plan for execution of ongoing communication but has indicated that there will be a stakeholder advisory committee that will meet quarterly. At the very least, the applicant indicates there will be ongoing communication through the district newsletter.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant refers to charts in the application but it is not clear which chart meets the criteria for this section. Specifically, areas that include health and socio-emotional leading indicators, or how it will review and improve the measure over time.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant plans to use its established continuous improvement plan to evaluate the effectiveness of investments. Included in this are quarterly progress updates on how Professional Development is working, a cost analysis of each activity and whether or not it has affected student or teacher progress.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a coherent and thorough budget and narrative explaining each project and rationales for personnel funding with the grant. The applicant has determined that some of the positions such as the Deans of students, the technology staff and the central registration clerk will remain beyond the grant. As such these positions will be funded by the district.</p> <p>In addition, the applicant plans to conduct direct market to students currently out of district and has determined the state funding these students will draw will also help fund the project.</p> <p>The applicant's budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposal. Finally, the applicant provides a listing of which items are one time investments (or costs) and which are ongoing operational costs. There is a focus on long term sustainability to ensure personalized learning environments.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not provide a high quality plan for sustainability for the project's goals after the term of the grant but does determine that most of the costs covered by the grant will have much lower costs to sustain, such as subscription renewals, instructional system for personalized learning, tutoring services and ipads. These items will be covered by the district. Other than the district itself, the applicant does not identify other sources of income, including state or foundation support.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	4

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides an exhaustive narrative on the need to provide prevention services to address behavioral and mental health issues that have been largely addressed in the elementary schools. As an example, there are currently no school counselors hired by the school district to serve this population of students. Based on the needs analysis conducted by the applicant, there is a great deal of unmet need in this area that leads to behavior issues, truancy, and other factors that contribute to academic challenges in the school setting. As a result, the primary focus of this competitive preference is around hiring school counselors or social workers and providing additional professional development for teachers to be able to identify challenges sooner.

This is a critical area of need that has a direct impact on student learning. It is questionable as to whether or not this proposal meets this criteria as no significant partnerships would be formed with a private or public entity to address this need.

If funded, the applicant will use data to ensure the right students are being served and plans to track those students being served to ensure the outcomes in attendance, number of discipline incidents, ways in which parents become more engaged and access services, and change in school climate surveys.

It is of note that the applicant has attempted to contract services with outside agencies but has not found success in meeting the needs of all of the students. This is clearly a significant need on behalf of the applicant, however, this proposal does not integrate the resources of an external agency to augment the services of the applicant.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant coherently and comprehensively addresses how it will build on the core educational assurance areas, especially in the area of teacher effectiveness, in order to create personalized learning environments. Through the implementation of blended learning and numerous other opportunities for students to engage in personalized learning opportunities, the applicant stands ready to accelerate student achievement, deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student, decrease achievement gaps and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and career.

In addition, this applicant has the ability to create a shift in the socioeconomic status of a community in preparing students for jobs available in the community.

Total	210	164
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